

Amendments to the Claims

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

1. (currently amended) A computer system, comprising:
an operating system;
at least one shareable file that is accessible to a plurality of users, wherein each shareable file is stored in a file storage memory location and is associated with a file path;
a shareable file tree comprising the file path of each shareable file;
a user file tree associated with a user and the shareable file tree, wherein the user file tree comprises at least one link, wherein each link is associated with the file path of a referenced file, such that the user file tree ~~is operable to point~~ points to the referenced file in response to a request to access a file; and
a private file area associated with ~~one of the plurality of users~~ each user, wherein ~~the each user's~~ each user's private file area ~~is operable to store~~ stores a file that is not ~~publicly~~ available to other users of the computer system,
wherein each user sees paths to files in his private file area, but files in any other user's private file area are invisible.

2. (currently amended) The computer system of Claim 1, wherein the user file tree is initially populated with links corresponding to the file path of a selected number of shareable files, such that the user file tree ~~is operable to point~~ points to a selected shareable file in response to a request to access the selected shareable file ~~to perform an operation that does not involve a modification of~~ but not to modify the shareable file.

3. (currently amended) The computer system of Claim 2, wherein the user file tree is initially populated with one or more links corresponding to the file ~~path of each~~ paths to the shareable ~~file~~ files.

4. (currently amended) The computer system of Claim 1, wherein the operating system ~~is operable to copy~~ copies a selected shareable file to a private file area associated with

one of the plurality of users and ~~modify~~ modifies the user file tree associated with ~~the~~ that user such that the link associated with the selected shareable file₂ points to the copy of the selected shareable file instead of the selected shareable file₁ in response to an attempt to ~~access~~ modify the selected shareable file ~~to perform an operation that involves a modification of the shareable file.~~

5. (original) The computer system of Claim 4, wherein the modification of the user file 10 tree is transparent to the user.

6. (currently amended) The computer system of Claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ at least one private file area is associated with a selected set of the plurality of users.

7. (original) The computer system of Claim 6, wherein the selected set of the plurality of users is associated with the operating system.

8. (currently amended) The computer system of Claim 1, wherein the private file ~~area is operable to~~ areas store files that do a file that does not comprise a link to either the user file tree or the shareable file tree.

9. (original) The computer system of Claim 1, wherein the user file tree further comprises metadata.

10. (original) The computer system of Claim 9, wherein a link located in the user file tree further comprises the metadata.

11. (original) The computer system of Claim 10, wherein the metadata comprises data associated with the user file tree.

12. (currently amended) The computer system of Claim 11, wherein the metadata ~~is operable to allow~~ allows the user to define a permitted access to a selected shareable file without copying the selected shareable file into the private file area.

13. (currently amended) A method for providing access to ~~one or more~~ shareable files in a computer network to a plurality of users, comprising the steps of:

creating a shareable file tree comprising a file path of each shareable file;

creating a user file tree for each user;

populating the user file tree with ~~one or more~~ links, wherein each link is associated with a shareable file in the shareable file tree, such that each link ~~is operable to point~~ points to the shareable file in response to a user request to access the shareable file; and

creating a private file area associated with [a] each user, wherein [the] each private file area ~~is operable to store~~ stores a file that is not ~~publicly~~ available to other users of the computer system,

wherein each user sees paths to files in his private area, but files in any other user's private file area are invisible.

14. (currently amended) The method of Claim 13, further comprising the steps of:
receiving a user request to access a selected shareable file ~~to perform an operation that does not involve a modification of~~ but not to modify the shareable file; and
pointing to the selected shareable file in response to the user request.

15. (currently amended) The method of Claim 13, further comprising the steps of:
receiving a user request to access a selected shareable file ~~to perform an operation that involves a modification of~~ modify the shareable file;
copying the selected shareable file into the private file area associated with the user;
modifying the user file tree associated with the user such that the link associated with the selected shareable file point to the copy of the selected shareable file located in the private file area associated with the user.

16. (original) The method of Claim 13, further comprising the steps of:
receiving a user request to delete a selected shareable file; and
deleting the link located in the user file tree that is associated with the selected shareable file in response to the user request to delete the selected shareable file.

17. (original) The method of Claim 13, further comprising the steps of:
receiving a user request to delete a selected private file stored in the private file area,
wherein the selected private file is not associated with a link; and

deleting the selected private file in response to the user request to delete the selected private file.

18. (original) The method of Claim 13, further comprising the steps of:
receiving a user request to delete a selected private file stored in the private file area,
wherein the selected private file is associated with a link in the user file tree;
deleting the selected private file in response to the user request to delete the selected private file; and
deleting the link associated with the selected private file in response to the user request to delete the selected private file.

19. (original) The method of Claim 13, wherein the step of creating a private file area further comprises the step of creating a private file area associated with a selected set of the plurality of users.

20. (original) The method of Claim 13, further comprising the step of creating a metadata associated with a selected one of the links associated with a shareable file in the shareable file tree.

21. (new) The computer system of Claim 1, wherein the links are files.

22. (new) The computer system of Claim 1, wherein only one version of a shareable file is maintained by the file system.

23. (new) The method of Claim 13, wherein the links are files.

24. (new) The method of Claim 13, wherein only one version of a shareable file is maintained by the file system.

25. (new) A computer system, comprising:
an operating system;
shareable files accessible to a plurality of users, and stored in a shareable file area and each shareable file associated with a file path;
a shareable file tree comprising the file path of each shareable file;

a user file tree associated with each user and the shareable file tree, wherein the user file tree comprises at least one link, wherein each link is associated with the file path of a referenced file, such that the user file tree points to the referenced file in response to a request to access a file; and

a plurality of private file areas, each user having his own private file area, wherein the private file area of each user stores files that are invisible to other users, and

wherein the computer system maintains only one version of any shareable file.